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- 2 1. A method of purchasing goods or services over a computer network, comprising the steps of:
- 4 conducting a search over the network to determine the most favorable advertised price for the goods or services; and
- using the most favorable advertised price as a starting point, soliciting bids over the network to find a price for the goods or services which is lower than the most favorable advertised price.
  - 2. The method of claim 1, wherein the network is the Internet.
- 3. The method of claim 1, wherein the step of conducting a search over thenetwork includes the use of an existing search engine.
  - 4. The method of claim 1, wherein:
- the most favorable advertised price is obtained from a first set of multiple vendors; and
- 4 the price which is lower than the most favorable advertised price is obtained from a second set of multiple vendors.
  - 5. A method for purchasing goods or services over the Internet, comprising
- 2 the steps of:

obtaining a posted price associated with the goods or services over the Internet;

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- determining the lowest posted price of the posted prices obtained in the previous step;
- submitting a starting bid over the Internet which is lower than the lowest posted price;
- 8 collecting one or more reverse bids over the Internet, wherein each reverse bid represents a price which is lower than the starting bid;
- selecting a final bid from among the reverse bids; and purchasing the goods or services using the final bid.
- 6. The method of claim 5, wherein the step of conducting a search over the network includes the use of an existing search engine.
  - 7. The method of claim 5, wherein:
- the most favorable advertised price is obtained from a first set of multiple vendors; and
- 4 the price which is lower than the most favorable advertised price is obtained from a second set of multiple vendors.